

said tobacco is exposed in said barn, wherein said barn as modified may be used for the curing of tobacco leaves].

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art of record suggests modifying a tobacco curing barn by replacing a direct fire heater with an electric or convection heater, which would inherently provide the tobacco barn with a heating unit that does not generate exhaust gases comprising nitric oxides; however, the prior art of record, does not teach nor reasonably suggest further modifying the barn to ensure that the *nitric oxide* level within the barn during tobacco curing is *suppressed* to prevent formation of nitrosamines in the tobacco, as Applicant has now claimed – which is fully supported by the instant specification on page 3, lines 30-34 and page 9, lines 31-32.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dionne A. Walls whose telephone number is (703) 305-0933. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 7AM - 4:30PM (Every other Friday off).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven P. Griffin can be reached on (703) 308-1164. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)

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872-9310 for regular communications and (703) 872-9311 for After Final
communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or
proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-
0661.


Dionne A. Walls

May 17, 2003